



Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

January 2007 • Vol. 2, No. 1



Left: First District Conservation Officers Scott Barrow, Brad Lowe, Ken Richards, and Dan Richardson prepared fish for the fryer at the annual Legislative Wild Game Dinner this month. Right: Fisheries biologist Don Bunnell carved buffalo roast as Senate President David Williams moved through the food line.

Governor Fletcher, legislative leaders attend annual Wild Game Dinner

Governor Ernie Fletcher and members of his executive cabinet joined House and Senate leadership, many other members of the General Assembly, members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and about 450 others at the annual Legislative Wild Game Dinner January 3rd in Frankfort.

The annual dinner is among the best attended of all the after-hours functions held for legislators



Governor Ernie Fletcher

during sessions. This was the 11th dinner sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

As usual, Department employees from across the state assembled early in the day outside the Frankfort Convention Center, set up their grills, slow cookers and

meal. Elk, buffalo, deer and fish were the main courses this year.

Fletcher, a member of the sportsman's caucus during his service in the U.S. Congress, spoke to those in attendance and commended legislators' participation in the General Assembly's sportsman's caucus.

He greeted many department employees as they prepared the meal's main courses and later applauded the Department's white-tailed deer, wild turkey and elk restoration successes when he spoke to the dinner crowd.



Winter trout stocking begins

Nearly 180,000 rainbow trout will be stocked in January and February in 17 lakes across the state.

Some smaller lakes are simply managed for a “put and take” winter fishery; since trout will not survive beyond June. However, some lakes like Laurel River Lake are stocked for a “put-grow-take” fishery where these trout will survive into the summer due to the cold-oxygenated depths. These lakes provide popular night-time fisheries during the summer months.

Winter trout fishing opportunities can be found in 15 seasonal catch and release streams that are scattered across Kentucky. These streams are stocked with rainbow trout in early October.

One of these streams, Swift Camp Creek, is also stocked a second time in April. Only artificial baits shall be used while fishing these streams during the catch and release season (no harvest) which extends on most streams from October 1 through May 31.

On Swift Camp Creek, the catch and release season extends through May 31. Statewide regulations then apply on these streams for the remainder of the year. Cumberland River below Wolf Creek Dam remains our premier trout stream and provides year-round fishing including trophy brown and rainbow trout opportunities.

Names and locations of the streams and lakes stocked with trout along with specific information on size and creel limit regulations for each water body can be found in our annual Sport Fishing and Boating Guide.



It was a great hunt for Dillon Spaulding and Abigail Orange in the annual Greenwing Hunt. The two were hunting in a Ballard County blind donated for the day by Bob Allen.

Camps to undergo renovations

Camper cabins at Camps Currie and Wallace are undergoing their first major renovations since being constructed decades ago. “We’re making a large capital investment in the camps that have been needed for a long time,” explained Information and Education Division Director Tim Slone.

The renovations – which include heating, air conditioning, insulation and new windows – will increase the comfort of campers and extend use of the camps for conservation programs during the off seasons.

New roofs for the cabins are planned for the future, as well as a proposal to replace the dining hall at Camp Currie, located on Kentucky Lake. Fishing docks at Currie and Wallace were also replaced with safer concrete pads as part of the renovation process.

Approximately 6,000 school-age children attend the department’s three conservation camps each year. Camps are important to the future of the department,

as they expose new generations to hunting, fishing, boating and the joys of the outdoors. Hundreds of thousands of kids have experienced the outdoors at these camps over the past 50 years.

The renovations are part of an overall plan to improve the camps. Money from camp fee increases imposed in 2006 are helping fund the much-needed repairs. This summer, campers also will be able to apply for the camps online, receiving a discount when they do so.

As a bonus for campers, 17 kids and their parents recently experienced a Greenwing Adventure waterfowl hunt at Ballard Wildlife Management Area. Long-time employee Doug Travis, who helped start the program, helped the fledgling hunters. “It was our most successful one ever,” Slone said. “They took 24 ducks and two geese.”

Slone noted that several parents enjoyed the experience so much that they expressed an interest in hunting and participating in the department’s Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program.



Mike Larimore, retiring manager of the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery, paddles his canoe on Elkhorn Creek near Frankfort.

Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery manager Mike Larimore retiring this month

Mike Larimore, manager of the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery in Frankfort, will be retiring in January 2007 after being manager of the hatchery since 1987.

Mike and his staff successfully reared channel catfish, bluegill, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, and sauger. They perfected the rearing techniques in Kentucky for blue and flathead catfish and gained self sufficiency for hybrid striped bass production. He also oversaw numerous renovation projects.

Mike obtained his BS degree in fisheries from Southern Illinois University in

1979. In 1980, before attending graduate school, Mike worked as a biologist on a 2,000 acre minnow farm in Arkansas.

In 1982, Mike obtained his Masters of Aquaculture degree from Auburn. He then worked as a Fish Culturist at the Auburn University Experimental Station and as Aquaculture Research Facility Manager at Kentucky State University before coming to the Department as manager of the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery.

We thank Mike for all his hard work and dedication and wish him the best of luck in his retirement!

2007 Fishing Forecast now available

The 2007 Fishing Forecast is now available and covers the majority of Kentucky's major fisheries.

The Forecast is a useful tool for identifying which lakes, rivers and streams will provide the best opportunity for a memorable fishing experience.

New for this year is the Fishing Forecast Cheat Sheet. The Cheat Sheet provides a quick way for anglers to identify water bodies which should provide

good or excellent fishing for their target fish species.

The Fishing Forecast can be found at Headquarters in Frankfort, District fisheries offices, boat shows, and will soon be published on the Fish and Wildlife web site.

As an added bonus, you will find two up-and-coming Master Angler's portrayed on the front page. Can you guess which proud parents and current Fish and Wildlife employees they belong to?

New largemouth bass assessments on the Web

The Fisheries Division has produced a series of Sport Fish Assessment Articles that will be published on the Department's Web site under Fishing-Fisheries Management-Sport fish Assessments.

Each year our fisheries crews collect data on the major sport fish species from lakes across the state. These data are compiled into tables and graphs that our biologists use to follow trends in fish populations.

These trends can be used to assess the overall well being of the fish populations in each water body and provide pertinent information which can be used to make informed management decisions. Previously this information was primarily for internal use. Now it will be packaged for "customer" use.

Each article will focus on a target sport fish species in a specific lake. The first series of articles will cover largemouth bass. Other species assessments will follow.

The largemouth bass assessments look at five population parameters which provide a snapshot of the health of the population in a specific lake. The assessment parameters cover age structure, size structure, growth and recruitment (number of young fish contributing to the population). These parameters are presented in both bar and line graphs which follow trends over the last 10 to 20 years.

Anglers will be able to see how well each lake ranks compared to other lakes of similar size for each parameter as well as an overall ranking for all parameters combined.

Is the largemouth bass population on the rise or decline? Are your chances of catching a bass over 15 inches greater at one lake than another? Anglers can get the answer by reading these assessments.

Billboards for Bob?

By John Morgan and Ben Robinson

Quail restoration and habitat management efforts are on the move across the state with momentum building over the last few months.

Regional public stakeholder meetings continued to reiterate the importance of quail, with sportsmen and women voicing their concerns about the loss of quail numbers and habitat at nearly every meeting.

Articles written on quail declines and habitat management featured in recent *Kentucky Living* and *Kentucky Afield* magazines prompted the public to respond with some interesting and important questions.

Landowners are aware of the drastic decline in quail numbers over the last several decades. Many of them are no longer simply expressing concern about quail numbers, because they are poised to take action. However, many sportsmen and women as well as landowners remain unaware of just what they need to do.

The Small Game Program has recently “stepped out-of-the-box” with graphic design help from I&E’s Obie Williams. We’ve embarked on an advertising campaign utilizing the tailgates of Department trucks to promote the Habitat Improvement Program and quail restoration statewide.

Truck tailgates will soon be transformed into moving “billboards” featuring



an image of a Northern Bobwhite and text, “Want More Wildlife, Ask Me How”. It also includes the department’s web address and information center telephone number.

We hope these billboards will generate some great questions from the public and allow us to reach an audience that we may have never had the opportunity to meet. Furthermore, State Parks have agreed to use a Northern Bobwhite placemat (designed by I&E’s Adrienne Yancy) in park dining rooms for children’s settings.

The front of the color placemat provides adults information about quail and their habitat, and the back offers games and coloring for kids.

It is an exciting time for quail habitat management and restoration efforts in Kentucky. Public awareness through education and advertising are just a few

key ways to ensure that we are on the right track.

A county-based restoration plan will be developed in the coming months that will outline specific habitat goals. For quail restoration to be successful, the full resources of the Department will need to be employed to change how landowners view their land.

We’ve proven that we can restore wildlife by relocations of wild animals (e.g., deer, turkey, elk, otters, among others), but can we create landscape-level habitat change on private land to bring back quail? To answer a question with a question, would someone in 1905 believe we’d have 6 million turkeys (1900 pop. 100,000) hunted in 48 states and 18,000,000 deer (1900 pop. 500,000) in 2007? Anything is possible!